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SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE ART EXHIBIT AT THE FAIR.—II A GLANCE AT THE LOAN COLLECTION



SUITE of three sacred rooms, which it is a relief to enter, contains the loan collection. Here it is no longer necessary to be constantly sifting out the important from the unimportant, for these canvases are all from the hands of acknowledged leaders of the great, though varying schools of art, and with the exception of the very modern pictures in Room 40, have already been winnowed

by time and judgment. Here is the fine flower of the art of the century, the resultant of years of struggles for ideals, the essence of modern thought and genius as applied to art. To appreciate all these and get the greatest possible pleasure out of them—only to be done by carefully placing yourself at the point of view of the artist when he painted—would indeed take a well-stored mind and a trained eye. One could spend days studying the twelve Corots, which illustrate all phases of the great landscapist's genius. To comprehend, to get yourself into the mental and visual attitude of all these men, would indeed be a strain. But few undertake it. Yet how crowded the rooms are all the time. It is pathetic to see how many people there are who are hungry to see and know, and then to think of what a very little way they can get into the complex world of art with "a whole day in the art building." Here is all technique, from the minute detail of Meissonier and Gerome to the seeming spots, splashes and streaks of Pissaro and Renoir, exponents of the last word in impressionism. Here, too, are all men's ideas of beauty, and artists agree no more than doctors, though beauty

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is their business. Millet, the Michelangelo of our period, liked to paint things that were "strong and ugly," like "The Man with the Hoe." How much like the great Florentine he is in "The Sheep-Shearers." That robust, heavy-featured woman with the shears might be the Delphic Sibyl. She has the same dignity and fine simplicity, if you only look at her seriously. Then the "Pig Killers," tugging away at their unwilling victim, when you come to look at them, they are beautifully dressed in the faded dull blues, greens and reds of their working clothes. Millet saw in the everyday incidents of the life of these people what were to him the most beautiful effects in the world and he gladly gave up Paris to go and live in their midst. Breton saw the more poetic side of peasant life and "The Song of the Lark" is a beautiful example of the type he chose. He doubtless often over-refined his models and has been accused of painting "the glorified French peasant," yet who shall say there never was a brown and happy country girl who went singing like this to her work, with the sun rising red behind her? In Bastien-Lepage, the early realist who painted his backgrounds so minutely that, after our modern students of the effects of atmosphere, his figures seem flat and pasted on—in Lhermitte and his "Washerwomen on the Banks of the Marne," with that exquisite light from the setting sun on the distant coast, and in Dagnan-Bouveret and his queer little "Brittany Peasant Baby," can be seen the various effects of the same life on differing men.

But we must take a general survey of the contents of these rooms. Bonington, Corot and a dark Constable are side by side. Daubigny, Dupré and Rousseau, the painter of bigness in little space, with 6x8 in. canvases as big as all out-doors, are friends in the same high sphere. Manet and Monet are so near that there can be no excuse for their ever being confounded again. Troyon and Courbet, not to mention Delacroix, Swan and Geri-cault, are near a canvas by the painter of the well-known "Horse Fair," and we can see at once how vastly over-rated

Mlle. Rosa Bonheur is. Mauve, Israels and J. Maris represent the Dutch school in to-day's art, although all are better shown in the Holland section. Tadema, the painter of marble, Meissonier, the dramatic Gerome and the rare Ingres vie with each other in point of finish. Decamps, the mighty Delacroix, and Fromentin with a splendid "Falconer," show us the Orient with art more than anyone paints it to-day. Detaille and de Neuville give us again their studies of French military character and costumes, truthful battle painters. There is a vision of Fantin-Latour's, and some of the beautiful groupings and rich colors of Diaz, Isabey and Monticelli. Although this is mainly a collection of French art, Germany is represented, not by Menzel, but by a Knaus and a Von Uhde, certainly one painted in an early manner, quite different from the technique of his religious canvases now. Ribot, Greuze and our modern Watts and Carolus-Duran each show us their ideas in painting the human figure. Michetti has a fantasy, and Fortuny a large "Beach at Portici," his last work, which, however, does not delight me as do his "trifles light as air." Michel, Couture and the Baron Leys, a poem by Francais and a dream by Tassaert afford us food for study that might well last weeks. The old English painters George Morland and the Academician Lefebvre are here; also Harry Thompson, the French-Englishman, and there is even a humorous bit by Jan van Beers, surely an unnecessary admission. To conclude, is a most interesting collection of examples of the most advanced painters of the hour, Zorn, Pissaro, Raffaelli, Renoir, Sisley, Degas, Cazin, Besnard, Helleu, and that pure classic in their midst, Puvis de Chavannes.

It is the most remarkable collection of modern art that has ever been made. Many do not realize that those competent to judge place it above the Luxembourg and the exhibition of "The Hundred Masterpieces." It is said that Frenchmen groan when they see how much of the best work of their greatest men has been allowed to come to this country. Yet, while regarding these

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one must not forget that in the other rooms of this huge building are without doubt a number of paintings that will in their turn be found some day in a "loan collection of masterpieces," carefully arranged for the study of men of a future generation. This *sanctum sanctorum* is well filled with the works of men who were considered revolutionists in their day. Do not forget that Delacroix, Corot, Millet, suffered and were despised for years. These galleries are only another proof of the constant evolution of all live art, which periodically rises up, throws off dead and artificial matter and goes back to nature, the starting point, again.

J. M. BOWLES



Memoranda

*Extreme
impressionism*

The top notch of "the blue and purple devils of impressionism" is reached by Besnard, in the French section, with his "Two Ponies Harassed by Flies." Surely this is as far as extremists can go in their studies of movement and color. It is a large canvas so effectually surrounded by dark ones that the first glimpse of its vivid green grass and its shadows of violet ink is calculated to make you catch your breath. It is true that if you look at this painting of "an impression of an instantaneous movement" quickly and turn away, you get a remarkable effect of kicking horses and dazzling sunlight, but could not brains and talent be put to better uses? And the same remark applies to the one painting our brilliant Mr. Wm. T. Dannat has chosen to send to represent his art at this great exposition—the row of wild-looking "Spanish Women" sitting on a bench in a glare of lavender, in the "impressionist's room" of the American section.

Oriental art

The art of Japan is a sealed book to most of us. This one small room of kakemonos, cloisonnés, porcelains and lacquers is a little island of Oriental art in the midst of an ocean of the art expression to which we are accustomed.